2

A BELIEVERS *Laſt Day* is his *Beſt Day.*

A

SERMON

Preached at the Funerall of

Mris MARTHA RANDOLL,

At *Chriſts* Church, *London*, June 28. 1651.

Brooks

By THOMAS BROOKS, Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Margarets Fiſh*-ſtreet-hill.

Thou wilt guide me by thy Counſell, and after receive me to glory. Pſal. 73. 24.

Light is ſowne for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. Pſal. 97. 11.

Ejus eſt timere mortem, qui ad Chriſtum nolit ire. *Cyp.*
Timor mortis pejor, quam ipſa mors. *Eraſ.*
Senibus mors in januis, adoleſcentibus in inſidiis. *Ber.*

LONDON:

Printed, and are to be ſould by *John Hancock* at the firſt Shop in *Popeſ-head*-Alley, next to *Cornhill*. 1660.

To my worthy and beloved Friends

Mr. *John Ruſſel*, and Mris *Martha* his Wife.

And to Mr. *Thomas Randoll*; all happineſſe in this world, and that which is to come.

My dear and worthy Friends;

THe enſuing Sermon was preached upon your importunity, and printed alſo upon the ſame account; you know nothing would ſatisfie your ſpirits but the printing of it, which at laſt made me unwillingly willing to anſwer your deſires: not that I did delight to deny your deſires, nor becauſe I prized it, but becauſe I thought it not good enough for you, nor worthy of that weight that you laid upon it, it being but the fruit of ſome ſhort broken meditations. I have now publiſhed theſe Notes which in all love I preſent to you; they were once in your ear, they are now in your eye & the Lord keep them ever in your hearts. If there be any thing in this Sermon worth the having, it is not mine but the Lords, through grace; I know that my beſt actions ſtand in need of ſweet

ſweet odours, a golden cenſer.

Dear Friends, You know we muſt all fall in the wilderneſs of this world, be gathered to our fathers, go hence and be no more ſeen: *Abraham* and *Sarah* muſt part, *Jacob* and *Rachel* muſt be ſeparated, *David* and his childe, muſt be ſevered. Our days are numbred, our period of time appointed, and our bounds we cannot paſs. *All fleſh is as graſſe, and the glory thereof as the flower of the field*: therefore don't mourn as perſons without hope, neither be like *Rachel* that would not be comforted. To that purpoſe take this counſel.

Firſt, Dwell much upon the ſweet behaviour of others, under the loſs of their neer and dear relations. When God had paſſed the ſentence of death upon *Davids* childe, he *aroſe from the earth, and waſhed, and anointed himſelfe, and changed his apparrel, and came into the houſe of the Lord, and worſhipped: then he came to his own houſe, and when he required, they ſet bread before him, and he did eat*. When his ſervants queſtioned this action, he anſwers, *Now he is dead, wherefore ſhould I faſt: Can I bring him back again? I ſhall go to him, but he ſhall not retnrn to me*. So when *Aarons* ſons were deſtroyed by fire for their offering up ſtrange fire, *Aaron* holds his peace: he

2 Sam. 12. 20.

Ver. 23.

Lev. 10. 2, 3.

he bridled his paſſions and ſubmitted ſweetly and quietly to divine Juſtice. So when it was told *Anaxagoras* that both his ſons (which were all he had) were dead; being nothing terrified therewith he anſwered, * I knew I begat mortal creatures. *Dranſi* people in *Thrace*, bury their children with great joy, but at their birth lament grievouſly, in regard of the miſeries that are like to befal them while they live.

* *Sciebam me genuiſſe mortales.*

Secondly, In time of croſſes, loſſes and miſeries, 'tis the wiſdom of beleevers to look more upon the Crown then upon the croſſe, to dwell more upon glory then upon miſery, to eye more the brazen Serpent that is lifted up, then the fiery Serpent that bites and ſtings. *Baſil* ſpeaketh of ſome Martyrs that were caſt out all night naked in a cold froſty time, and were to be burned the next day, how they comforted themſelves in this manner; *The winter is ſharp but Paradiſe is ſweet*: here we ſhiver for cold, but the boſome of *Abraham* will make amends for all. *Galen* writes of a fiſh called *Uranoſcopos* that hath but one eye, and yet looks continually up to heaven: a Chriſtian under the croſs ſhould always have an eye looking up to heaven, that ſo his ſoul may not faint, and he may give glory to God in the day of viſitation.

2 Cor. 4. 16, 17, 18. Heb. 10. 34 & 11, 23, 25, 26, 35. & 12. 1, 2, 3. *Baſil ad 40 Martyr.*

Tolle cœlum nullus ero, ſaid the Philoſopher.

on. It is recorded of *Lazarus*, that after his reſurrection from the dead he was never ſeen to laugh, his thoughts and affections were ſo fixt in heaven though his body was on earth, that he could not but ſlight temporal things, his heart being ſet upon eternal things. A man (ſaith one) would dwell in this contemplation of heaven and be loth to come out of it. Nay ſaith another, a man might age himſelfe in it, and ſooner grow old then weary.

Let heaven be a mans object, and the earth will be his abject. *Chryſoſtome. Auguſtine.*

Thirdly, Compare your mercies and your loſſes together, and you ſhall finde that your mercies will wonderfully outweigh your loſſes; you have loſt one mercy, you enjoy many mercies. What is the loſſe of a Wife, a Childe, or any other temporal mercy, to a ſouls enjoyment of the favour of God, pardon of ſin, peace of conſcience, hopes of Heaven, *&c.* Beſides you enjoy many temporal mercies that many of the precious ſons of *Zion* want, *&c.*

Fourthly, Conſider ſeriouſly of the reaſons of Gods ſtripping his people of their neereſt and their deareſt mercies; and they are theſe,

1. For a trial of the ſtrength and power of their graces. 'Tis not every croſſe nor every loſſe that tries the ſtrength of a Chriſtians graces: *Job* held

bravely in the face of many afflictions for a time, but when he was throwly wet to the skin, then he acts like a man rather void of grace, then like a man that did excel all others in grace. When God burns up the out-houſes but leaves the Palace ſtanding; when he takes away the ſervant but leaves the childe; when he gathers here a flower and there a flower out of mens gardens, but leaves the flowers that are the delight of their eyes and the joy of their hearts, they bare it patiently and ſweetly: but when he burns up the Palace, and takes away the child, and gathers the faireſt flower in all our garden, then we uſually ſhew our ſelves to be but men, yea to be weak men paſſionately crying out, *O my ſon Abſolom, my ſon, my ſon Abſolom, would God I had died for thee O Abſolom my ſon, my ſon.*

2. God paſſes the ſentence of death upon mens deareſt mercies, that himſelf may be more dreaded, and that his precious ſervants and their counſel may be the better minded and regarded. The *Ægyptians* trembled not under ſeveral judgements, nor minded not what *Moſes* and *Aaron* ſaid till God ſmote their firſt-borne, and then they tremble, and then the ſervants of the Lord and their counſel found better quarter with them then

God tried the ſtrength of *Abrahams* faith, and the ſtrength of *Jobs* patience, and the ſtrength of *Moſes* meekneſſe, and the ſtrength of *Davids* zeal, and the ſtrength of *Pauls* courage to the utmoſt God will not only try the truth, but he will alſo try the ſtrength of every grace that is in a beleever ſooner or later. Exod. 12. 27, 30, 31.

It is the obſervation of *Theodoret*, that when God ſmote *Pharohs* firſt born, he drew bloud of the arm for the cure of the head; whichbecauſe

then formerly they had done. Ah friends, Has the Lord ſmitten your firſt-born (as I may ſay) then look to it (as you tender the honour of God, the advancement of the Goſpel, the peace of your own conſciences, the ſtopping of the mouths of the wicked, and the gladding of thoſe hearts that God would not have ſadded,) that God be more dreaded, and that his ſervants, and his ſervices be more owned, loved and regarded. The people of God, and the Ordinances of God, are to God as his firſt-born: and they that make light of Gods firſt-born, God will make as light of their firſt-born. Theſe *Ægyptians* had ſlaine *Iſrael* Gods firſt-born, and therefore God ſmites their firſt-born. My deſire and prayer ſhall be, that Gods removing and taking away your firſt-born (as I may ſay) may be the making of more roome in your boſomes for God, Chriſt, Saints and Ordinances, that ſo your great loſſe may be turned into the greateſt gain. And certainly, if this phyſick; this potion that is given you by an out-ſtretched hand from Heaven don't work this, the next potion will be far more bitter.

it mended not thereupon came all to confuſion.

John 5. 14.

3. God paſſes the ſentence of death upon mens neereſt and deareſt mercies, that he may win them to a more com-

pleat and full dependance upon his bleſſed ſelf: man is a creature apt to hang and reſt upon creature props: *I looked on my right hand, and beheld* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me, no man cared for my ſoul*, Well, what does he do now all props fail him? why now he ſweetly leanes upon God. *I cryed unto thee O Lord, I ſaid, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.* *Cynægirus* an *Athenian* Captain uſed great valour in the *Perſian* war, purſuing his enemies that were laden with the rich ſpoil of his country; and were ready to ſet ſail and be gone: he held the ſhip with his right hand, and when that was cut off, he held it with the left; that alſo being cut off he held it with the ſtumps till his arms were cut off, and then he held it with his teeth till his head was cut off. It is the very temper of moſt men and women in the world, they will hold upon one prop, and if God cut off that, then they will catch hold on another, *&c.* till God cut off all their props, and then they will come and reſt and centre in God, in whom are all their wel-ſprings.

Pſal. 124. 4.

Ver. 5.

Pſal. 87. 7.

4 God ſtrips his people of their deareſt mercies, that he may work their hearts to a more ſtrict and diligent ſearch and examination of their own hearts & ways,

that

that they may ſay with the Church, *Let us ſearch and try our wayes, and turn to the Lord our God.* The Hebrew word that is rendred *ſearch*, ſignifies to ſearch as you would doe to finde out a diſguiſed perſon that puts himſelf into aſtrange habit that he might not be diſcovered. When Gods hand, when Gods rod is upon our backs, our hands muſt be upon our hearts, and we muſt cry out, What evil have we done, what evil have we done; *Seneca* reports of one *Sexius*, who would every night ask himſelf three queſtions; 1. What evil haſt thou healed to day? 2. What vice haſt thou ſtood againſt this day? 3. In what part art thou bettered this day? When the ſtorm beats ſtrong upon you, you had need to ſee what *Jonah* is aſleep at the bottom of your ſouls, that ſo he being diſcovered and caſt over-board, your ſouls may be ſafe, for in the drowning of your ſins lies the ſecurity of your ſoul.

Lam. 3. 39, 40 48.
חפש
Chaphas.

5 He ſtrips his people of their deareſt outward mercies, that they may be more compaſſionate toward thoſe that are or ſhall be in the ſame condition with themſelves. The *Jews* at this day, in their very nuptial feaſts and mirth, break a glaſſe with wine in remembrance of *Jeruſalem*, ſaying when they throw it down, Thus was *Jeruſalem* broken, and what

That ſentence likes me well for you that he ſaid of himſelf, I have no wit but weeping.

what they ſpil in wine theyfil with tears. Is it not a ſhame to have the ſame name, the ſame faith the ſame Chriſt, the ſame profeſſion, *&c.* and to deſire alwayes to tread on Roſes, to be embarked in this great Ship of Chriſtianity with ſo many brave ſpirits, and to go under hatches to ſleep like the out-caſts and ſcorn of humane nature? Saints ſhould be like two Lute ſtrings that are tuned one to another, no ſooner one is ſtruck but the other trembles.

Diogenes taxed the folly of the men of his time, that they undervalued the beſt things, but overvalued the worſt, ah that this were not the ſin and ſhame of profeſſors in theſe days.

6. God ſtrips his people of their neereſt and deareſt outward mercies, that they may the more prize and the better taſte ſpiritual and heavenly mercies, he takes away uncertain riches, that they may the more prize certain riches; he takes away natural ſtrength, that they may the more prize ſpiritual ſtrength; he takes away the creature, that they may more prize their Saviour. Spirituall and heavenly things are of neereſt and greateſt concernment to you, ſpirituals, will only abide with you in all changes, ſpirituals can only ſatisfie your ſoules. The language of a gracious ſpirit is this; Ah Lord, as what I have if offered to thee pleaſeth not thee without my ſelfe, ſo the good things I have from thee, though they may refreſh me, yet they cannot ſatisfie me without thy ſelf.

John 14. 8.

The

The fifth and laſt word of counſel that I ſhall give you, is this, Conſider ſeriouſly and frequently, that Gods taking away or removing of one mercy, is but his making of way for another, and uſually for a better mercy. He took from *David* a *Michal*, and gave him a wife *Abigal*, an *Abſolom* and gave him a *Solomon*. He took away the bodily preſence of Chriſt from his Diſciples, but gave them more abundantly of his ſpiritual preſence, which was far the choicer and the ſweeter mercy. God will alwayes make that word good, *I will not leave you comfortleſſe*, or as the Greek hath it, *I will not leave you as Orphans or fatherleſſe Children*, no, I will come and comfort you on every ſide, and I will make up all your wants, and be better to you then all your mercies. *For your braſſe I will give you ſilver, and for your iron you ſhall have gold*, &c.

John 16. 7,8. *Hujuſmodi lucri, dulcis odor*; the ſmell of this gain is ſweet to many.

John 14. 18. ὀρφάνους *ab* ὀρφνή.

Iſa. 60. 17.

To draw to a cloſe, let that dead man or dead woman be lamented, whom Hell harboureth, whom the Devil devoureth, whom Divine Juſtice tormenteth: But let thoſe whoſe departed ſouls Angels accompany, Chriſt imboſometh, and all the court of Heaven comes forth to welcom, account immortality a mercy, and be grieved that they are ſo long detained from the ſweet company of Chriſt, &c.

I deſire you (and all others that ſhall read what is here written) to overlook the miſtakes of the Printer, if you meet with any, I having no time to wait upon the Preſſe to correct what may be found amiſſe. The peruſal and acceptance of what I here preſent in love, I ſhall leave your judgements, and reſt,

Yours to love and ſerve

in our deareſt Lord.

THOMAS BROOKS.

A Saints

A Saints Laſt Day is his Beſt Day.

Beloved, I am here at this time to ſpeak a word to the living, my buſineſs being not to ſpeak any thing of the dead. Be pleaſed therefore to caſt your eye upon

ECCLES. 7. 1.

A good Name is better then precious Oyntment, and the day of death, then the day of ones birth.

I Shall ſtand upon the latter part of this Verſe at this time.

And the day of death, then the day of ones birth.

THE *Greeks* ſay, *That the beginning of a mans Nativity, is the begetting of his Miſery.* In *Job* 14. 1. *Man that is born of a woman, is born to trouble and ſorrow.* The Hebrew word that is there rendred (*Born*) ſignifieth alſo generated or conceived, to note to us, that man is miſerable as ſoon as he is warm in the womb; ילוד *Jeludh.*

womb; he comes crying into the world. Before ever the child ſpeaks, he Propheſies by his tears of his enſuing ſorrows.

A fletu vitam auſpicatur, ſaith *Seneca*.

And this made *Solomon* to prefer his Coffin before his Crown, the day of his diſſolution before the day of his Coronation. But not to hold you longer from what is mainly intended. The Obſervation that I ſhall ſpeak to at this time, is this,

That a Believers laſt day is his beſt day, his dying day is better then his birth day.

This will be a very ſweet and uſeful point to all believers. I ſhall firſt demonſtrate the truth that it is ſo, and then make ſome uſe of this point to our ſelves.

The firſt thing that doth with open mouth ſpeak out this truth, is this, That death is a change of place. A believer when he dyeth, he doth but change his place; he changeth Earth for Heaven, a Wilderneſs for a *Canaan*, an *Ægypt* for a Land of *Goſhen*, a dunghil for a Palace. As it is ſaid of *Judas*, that *he went to his place*. A ſoul out of Chriſt is not in his place, beneath is his place. So when a believer dyeth, he goes to his place, Heaven, the boſom of Chriſt is his place. And that ſpeaks out the truth aſſerted, *That a Believers dying day is his beſt day.*

2 Cor. 5. 6. A believer now is not in his place, but his

his ſoul is ſtill working and warring, and he cannot reſt tell he comes to center in the boſome of Chriſt. This *Paul* well underſtood, when he ſaid, *I long to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt.* I would faine weigh Anchor, hoyſe ſayle, and away home. And upon this account thoſe precious ſouls groaned for deliverance, 2 *Cor.* 5. 2. *For this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be cloathed with our houſe which is from Heaven.* What is the ground? why 'tis this, *While we are in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.* We be not in our place, and therefore we groan to be at home, that is, to be in Heaven, to be in the boſome of Chriſt, which is our proper place, our moſt deſireable home.

Phil. 1. 23.

Verſ. 6.

The ſecond thing which doth demonſtrate the truth aſſerted, is this, That death is a change of company. The beſt that breatheth in this world, muſt live with the wicked, and converſe with the wicked, *&c.* and this is a part of their miſery, 'tis their hell on this ſide Heaven. This ſtuck upon the ſpirit of *David*, *Woe is me that I am conſtrained to be in Meſhek, and to dwell in the Tents of Kedar.* &c. And ſo *Jer.* 9. 2. *O that I had in the wilderneſs a lodging place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them, for they be all adulterers, an aſſembly of treacherous men.* And this was that

Pſal. 120. 5.

I have read of a good Gentlewoman, who being near death, cryed out, O Lord let me not go to hell

where the wicked are, for thou knoweſt that I never loved their company in the time of life. ἐβδελυξάμην. Vide *Bezam.*

that that did vex and tear *Lots* righteous ſoul, 2 *Pet.* 2. 7,8. *His ſoul was vexed from day to day with their unlawful deeds.* The word ſignifies to *Rack*, he was racked to ſee their unlawful deeds. O but death is a change of company; a man doth change the company of profane perſons, of vile perſons, *&c.* for the company of Angels, and the company of weak Chriſtians, for the company of juſt men made perfect. That is a remarkable place, *We are come to Mount Sion* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general Aſſembly, and Church of the firſt born which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect.* Here is a change indeed. Death is a change of company, as well as a change of place. And if this be but well weighed, it muſt needs be granted, *That a believers dying day is better then his birth day.*

Heb. 12. 22, 23.

3 Death is a change of imployment. A believing ſoul when he dies, changeth his work and imployment. I open it thus, The work of a believer in this world lyes in praying, groaning, ſighing, mourning, wreſtling, and fighting, *&c.* And we ſee throughout the Scripture, that the choiceſt Saints that have had the higheſt Viſions

sions of God, have driven this trade, they have spent their time in praying, groaning, mourning, wrastling and fighting. *Eph.*6.10. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against Rulers of the darknesse of this world; against spirituall wickednesse in high places.* The truth is, the very life of a Believer is a continuall warfare; and his businesse is to be in the field alwayes: they have to deal with subtle enemies, malicious enemies, wakefull enemies, and watchfull enemies; with such enemies; that threw down *Adam* in Paradise, the most innocent man in the world; and that threw down *Moses*, the meekest man in the world; and *Job*, the patienst man in the world; and *Joshua*, the most couragious man in the world; and *Paul*, the best Apostle in the world, *&c.* A Christians life is a warfare, *Job* saith, *All the time of warfare will I waite till my change come:* I am still a fighting, saith *Job*, with lusts and corruptions within; and with devils and men abroad; *All the time of my warfare will I waite till my change come:* So in the 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. *I have fought the good fight of faith, &c.* And so in the 2 *Tim.* 2. 4. *No man that warreth intangleth himself with the affairs of this life, &c.* Death is a change of em-

Probus a valiant Roman Emperors Motto was (*Pro stipe labor*) No fight, no pay. So I say, No fight no Crown, no fight no Heaven.

Job 14. 14. צבאי

Alexander sent messengers to *Mandanius*, a famous Philosopher, to tell him that if he would doe so and so, he should be rewarded; and if he did not, he should be put to death. The Philosopher answered the

Meſſengers, That for his gifts he eſteemed them worth no thing, ſeeing his own Country could furniſh him with neceſſaries; and as for death, he did not fear it, but wiſh it rather, in that it was a change unto a more happy eſtate. So far did meer Philoſophy carry men in the opinion of felicity.

ployment, it changeth this hard ſervice; this work that lies in mourning, wraſtling, and fighting; for joying and ſinging *Hallelujahs* to the Almighty. Now no prayers, but praiſes; no fighting and wraſtling, but dauncing and triumphing. Can a believing ſoul look upon this glorious change, and not ſay, Surely *Better is the day of a believers death, then the day of his birth.* Death is the winding-ſheet that wipes away all tears from the believers eyes, *Rev.* 7. 9.

Death is a change of enjoyments, as well as a change of employments. I ſhall expreſſe this in three conſiderable things.

1. It is a change of our more dark and obſcure enjoyment of God, for a more clear and ſweet enjoyment of God. I ſay the beſt Believer that breaths in this world, that doth ſee and enjoy moſt of God, and the viſions of his glory, yet he enjoys not God ſo clearly, but that he is much in the dark. The Apoſtle *Paul* was a man that was high in his enjoyments of God, yet while he was here in the fleſh, he did but ſee as through a glaſſe: We *ſee through a glaſſe darkly*; but then face to face; then we ſhall know even as we are known. God told *Moſes* that he could not ſee his face and live: the truth is, we are able to bear but little of the diſcoveries of God, there being

1 Cor. 13. 12. αἰνίγματι. In a riddle.

being ſuch a mighty majeſty and glory in all the ſpirituall diſcoveries of God. We are weak and able to take in little of God; we have but dark apprehenſions of God; witneſſe our tears, ſighs, groans, and complaints; becauſe we goe forward and backward: We look on the right hand and on the left (as *Job* ſpeaks) and God hideth himſelf that we cannot ſee him. *Plutarch* tels of *Eudoxus*, that he would be willing to be burnt up preſently by the Sun, ſo he might be admitted to come ſo near it as to learn the nature of it. This is upon the heart of believers, Lord let us be burnt up, ſo we may ſee thee more in all thy glorious manifeſtations; let us be poor, let us be any thing ſo that we may be taken up into a more clear enjoyment of thy ſelf. Ask them that live higheſt in the enjoyment of God, What is your greateſt burthen? and they will tell you, this is our greateſt burden, that our apprehenſions of God are no more clear, that we cannot ſee him face to face, whom our ſouls doe dearly love: Oh but now in Heaven Saints ſhall have a clear viſion of God: there be no clouds nor miſts in Heaven.

Job 23. 8, 9

Chryſoſtome profeſſeth, that the want of the enjoyment of God would be a far greater Hell to him, then the feeling of any puniſhment.

2. It is a change of our imperfect and incompleat enjoyments of God, for a more compleat and perfect enjoyment of him. As no Believer hath a clear ſight

of God here, ſo no believer hath a full and perfect ſight of God here. In *Job* 26. 14. how little a portion is heard of him (ſpeaking of God) and of that is heard, ah how little a portion is underſtood! So in 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. *Now we ſee through a glaſſe darkly, but then face to face:* Now I know in part, but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known. The ſoul while it is here, dares not but ſay I enjoy ſomething of God, and that that I would not want for a thouſand worlds; yet my enjoyment is not full. If you ſhould ſay, Souls why doe you wait upon God in this Ordinance and that Ordinance? they will anſwer, That we may enjoy God more fully. *Fly away ſpeedily my beloved*: what is the meaning of this language but this; O that I might be filled with the fullneſſe of God. There is no complaints in Heaven, becauſe there is no wants. O, when death ſhall give the fatall ſtroke, there ſhall be an exchange of earth for Heaven, of imperfect enjoyments, for perfect enjoyments of God; then the ſoul ſhall be ſwallowed up with a full enjoyment of God; no corner of the ſoul ſhall be left empty, but all ſhall be filled up with the fullneſſe of God: here they receive grace for grace, but in Heaven they ſhall receive glory for glory. God keeps the beſt wine till laſt;

דבר *Dabar. i. e.* A word or thing, O how little a word, how little a thing is heard of him. 'Tis an excellent expreſſion that *Auguſtine* hath, The good things of eternall life (ſaith he) are ſo many, that they exceed number; ſo precious, that they exceed eſtimation; ſo great, that they exceed meaſure. *Eſſe Chriſtum cum Paulo, magna ſecuritas; eſſe Paulũ cum Chriſto, ſumma felicitas.* Bern. For Chriſt to be with *Paul* was the grea-

laſt; the beſt of God, Chriſt and Heaven, is behind: here we have but ſome ſips, ſome taſts of God, fullneſſe is reſerved for a glorious ſtate: He that ſees moſt of God here, ſees but his back-parts, his face is a Jewel of that ſplendor and glory, that no eye can behold but a glorified eye: our hearts are like a viol-glaſs, which will not fill on a ſudden, though it lye in the midſt of the Sea, where all fullneſſe is. The beſt Chriſtian is able to take in but little of God, their hearts are like the widowes veſſel that could receive but a little oyl. Sin, the world, and creatures, doe take up ſo much room in the beſt hearts, that God is put upon giving out himſelfe by a little and little, as parents do to their children; but in Heaven God will communicate himſelf fully at once to the ſoul, grace ſhall then be ſwallowed up of glory.

3. It is a change of a more inconſtant and tranſient enjoyment of God, for a more conſtant and permanent enjoyment of God. Here the Saints enjoyment of God is unconſtant; one day they enjoy God, and another day the ſoul ſits and complains in anguiſh of ſpirit. He that ſhould comfort my ſoul ſtands afar off, my glaſſe is out, my Sun is ſet, and what can make up the want of this ſun; as all candle-light, Star-light, and torch-light,

reſt ſecurity, but for *Paul* to be with Chriſt, was the chiefeſt felicity. *Chryſoſtome* ſaith, It 'twere poſſible that all the ſufferings of the Saints ſhould be laid upon one man, it were not worth one hours being in *Heaven*. Such is the greatneſſe and fulneſſe of that glory above. The Saints Motto is, *Migremus hinc, migremus hinc*, Let us goe hence, let us goe hence.

By death Saints come to a fixed and invariable eternity. *Nescio quid erit, quod ista vita non erit*, &c. August i. e. What will that life be, or rather what will not that life be, since all good either is not at all, or is in such a life, light which place cannot comprehend, noises and musick which time cannot vanish away, odours which are never dissipated, a feast which is never consumed, a blessing which eternity bestoweth, but eternity shall never be at an end.

light, cannot make up the want of the light of the Sun; so when the Son of Righteousnesse hides his face, it is not all creature-comforts that can make up the want of his countenance. *David* sometimes could say, that *God was his portion, and his salvation, and his strong tower*; and what not? and yet presently cryes out, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?* In one place he saith, *I shall never be moved*, and yet presently it follows, *Thou hidst thy face from me, and I was troubled*. And this is the state of a believer in this world. But in heaven there shall no clouds arise between the Lord and a believing heart: God will not one day smile, and another day frown; one day take a soul in his arms, and another day lay that soul at his feete; This is his dealing with his people here. But in heaven there is nothing but kisses and embraces, nothing but a perpetuall enjoyment of God. When once God takes the soul unto himself, it shall never be night with it any more; never dark with that soul more, *&c.* all tears shall then be wiped away. That is a sweet word in the 1 *Thes.* 4. 17, 18. *And so shall we be ever with the Lord, wherefore comfort one another with these words*. There are, saith *Musculus*, Angels and Arch-angels in Heaven, I

but

but they doe not make heaven. Chriſt is the moſt ſparkling Diamond in the Ring of glory. It is heaven and happineſſe enough to ſee Chriſt, and to be for ever with Chriſt. Now, O what a glorious change is this? Methinks theſe things ſhould make us long for our dying day: and account this life but a lingering death.

There is nothing excellent that is not perpetuall, ſaith *Gregory Nazian.* Philoſophers could ſay, that he was never a happy man that might afterwards become miſerable. 1 Sam. 16. Pſal. 42. Pſal. 30. 6, 7. Eternity is that *Unum perpetuum hodie.*

5. Conſider this, Death is a change that puts an end to all externall and internall changes. What is the whole life of a man but a life of changes? Death is a change that puts an end to all externall changes: here you change your joy for ſorrow, your health for ſickneſſe, your ſtrength for weakneſſe, your honour for diſhonour, your plenty for poverty, your beauty for deformity, your friends for foes, your ſilver for braſſe, and your gold for copper: Now the comforts of a man are ſmiling, the next hour they are dying, *&c.* All temporals are as tranſitory as a haſty headlong torrent, a ſhip, a bird, an arrow, a poſt, that paſſeth by. Man himſelf, the King of theſe outward comforts; what is he but a meer nothing? the dream of a dream, a ſhadow, a bubble, a flaſh, a blaſt. Now death puts an end to all externall changes: there ſhall be no more ſickneſſe, no more complaints, no more wants, *&c.*

And then it puts an end to all internall changes.

Now the Lord ſmiles upon the ſoul, and anon he frowns upon the ſoul: Now God gives aſſiſtance to conquer ſin, anon the man is carried captive by his ſin; now he is ſtrengthned againſt the temptation, anon he falls before the temptation, *&c.* *Job* carried it out bravely in the midſt of ſtorms, and ſpeaks like an Angel: But when *Job* was wet to the skin, and the Arrows of the Almighty ſtuck in him, and his day was turned into night, and his rejoycing into mourning, *&c.* then a man would have thought him a devil incarnate by his curſing. But death puts an end to internall changes, as well as externall changes: Now the ſoul ſhall be tempted no more, ſin no more, be foyled no more. Now you may judge by this, that a Chriſtians dying day is his beſt day. Death is another *Moſes*, it delivers believers out of bondage, and from making brick in *Ægypt*. It is a day or year of Jubilee to a gracious ſpirit, the year wherein he goes out free from all thoſe cruell taskmaſters, which it had long groaned under. The Heathen gods held death to be mans *ſummum bonum*, his chiefeſt good; therefore when one of them had built and dedicated the Temple at *Del-*

phos,

phos, he asked of *Apollo* for his recompence the thing that was beſt for man: the Oracle told him, that he ſhould goe home, and within three dayes he ſhould have it; within which time he dyed; Thus the very Heathens themſelves have conſented to this truth, That a mans dying day is his beſt day.

6. Death is a Change that brings the ſoul to an unchangeable Reſt, it is a bringing of the ſoul to bed to a ſtate of eternall reſt. That is the laſt demonſtration of the Point, that a believers dying day is his beſt day. Now while we are here the ſoul is in a toſſe. The beſt man in the world that is higheſt and cleareſt in his enjoyments of God, is too often like to *Noahs* dove that found no reſt? either he wants ſome externall mercy or internall mercy, and will doe ſo till the ſoul be ſwallowed up in the everlaſting enjoyments of God: But death brings a man to an unchangeable reſt. In *Rev.* 14. 13. *I heard a voyce from heaven, ſaying to me, Write, from henceforth bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord*; Why? *for they reſt from their labours, &c.* O, ſaith he, Write it down as a thing of worth and weight, *Bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they reſt from their labours*, &c. Death brings the ſoul to unchangeable reſt. In *Iſa.* 57. 1, 2.

Death is a reſt from the trouble of our particular callings; it is a reſt from afflictions, a reſt from perſecutions, a reſt from temptation, a reſt from deſertion, a reſt from ſin, and a reſt from ſorrow. Gen. 8, 8.

Laurence Saunders kiſſing the ſtake, ſaid, Welcome the croſſe of Chriſt, welcome everlaſting life. *Funius* the Italian Martyr kiſſed him that brought him word of his execution.

The righteous periſh, and no man layeth it to heart, &c. he ſhall enter into peace, they ſhall reſt in their beds, each one walking in his uprightneſſe. O! death is a change that brings a ſoul to unchangeable reſt, it brings a ſoul abed. This was that that made *Paul* long *to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt*; And the *Corinthians* to groan for deliverance. It was a notable ſaying of bleſſed *Cooper*, Many a day have I ſought death with tears, not out of impatience or diſtruſt (ſaith he) but becauſe I am weary of ſin, and fearfull to fall into it. You know how the Martyrs hugged the ſtake, and welcomed every Meſſenger of death that came to them, and clap'd their hands in the midſt of the flames. Death is a believers Coronation day, it is his marriage day, It is a reſt from ſin, a reſt from ſorrow, a reſt from afflictions and temptations, *&c.* Death to a believer is an entrance into *Abrahams* boſome, into Paradiſe, into the *new Jeruſalem*, into the joy of his Lord. And thus much for the doctrinall part: You ſee that it is clear by theſe ſix things, *That a Believers dying day is his beſt day*, and *the day of his death better then the day of his birth.*

I might by many other arguments demonſtrate this truth to you, but let theſe ſuffice,

ſuffice, becauſe I would not unwillingly keep you longer from the uſe and Application of the point: Application being the life of all teaching. Now the

First Uſe ſhall be this. Then never mourn immoderately at the death of any believer, let them be the moſt excellent and uſefull that ever lived. Death is to them the greateſt gain; And it ſpeaks out much ſelfiſhneſſe in us to be more taken with the gain and benefit that redounds to us by their lives, then with the happineſſe and glory that redounds to them by their deaths. In the primitive times when God had paſt the ſentence of death upon their deareſt comforts, Chriſtians did carry it at a more high, ſweet, and noble rate, then now adayes they doe. Remember this, death doth that (I ſay) in a moment, that no graces, no duties, nor no ordinances could do for a man all his life time; it frees a man from thoſe diſeaſes, corruptions, temptations, *&c.* that no duties, nor graces, nor Ordinances could do. When *Abram* came to mourn for his deceaſed *Sarah*, he mourned moderately for her, as is imported by a ſmall Caph in the word *Libcothath*, that ſignifies to weep, in that Hebrew word there is one little letter extraordinary, to note that *Abraham* wept but a little for her, not becauſe

Death is not *mors homini*, but *mors peccati*, not the death of the man, but the death of his ſin. Gen. 23. 2.

לררתה

cauſe ſhe was old and overworn (as ſome Rabbins ſay,)but becauſe her dying day was her beſt day. When *Luther* that famous inſtrument of God buried his daughter, he was not ſeen to ſhed a tear. So Mr *Wheatly* (who was famous in his time) when as he had preached his own childes Funerall Sermon upon this Subject, *The will of the Lord be done*, He and his wife laid their own childe in the grave. That is the firſt Uſe, let us not mourn immoderately for any believers death.

The people in *Thrace* mourn and greatly lament at the birth of their children, becauſe of the ſorrowes and troubles they are born to, and they greatly joy and rejoyce at the death of their children, becauſe death is the funerall of all their ſorrows. Death is not ſuch as you, as ſome would paint it.

Then in the next place,fear not death; Compoſe your ſpirits; ſay not of death, as that wicked Prince ſaid to the Prophet, *Haſt thou found me, O my Enemy?* but rather long for it, not to be rid of troubles, but that the ſoul may be taken up to a more clear and full enjoyment of God. Your dying day is your beſt day. Good *Jacob* dies with a ſweet compoſed ſpirit; he cals for his children, and bleſſeth, and kiſſeth them, and gathers up his feet into his bed and dies. *Moſes* that morning that the Meſſenger came to him, and told him he muſt die, he goes up the hill, ſees the Land of *Canaan* at a diſtance, and dies. *Cato* a Heathen man told *Cæſar*, that he feared his pardon more then the pain that he threatned: *Joſeph* built his ſepulchre in his own gar-

It was the ſaying of an Heathen man, That the whole life of a man ſhould be nothing elſe but (*Meditatio mortis*)

garden. And ſome Philoſophers had their graves alwayes open before their gates, that going out and coming in, they might alwayes think of death, for in life they found comforts to be rare, croſſes frequent, pleaſures momentany, and pains permanent. Believers, your dying day is your beſt day; Oh then be not afraid of death, and that you may not, remember that it is not ſuch a ſleight matter as ſome make it, to be unwilling to die; There is much reproach caſt upon God by believers being unwilling to die; you talk much of God, Heaven, and Glory, *&c.* and yet when you ſhould come to go and ſhare in this glory, you ſhrug, and ſay, Spare me a little: Is not this a reproach to the God of glory? But that this counſell may ſtick upon you, remember theſe five things.

a meditation of death. See *Deut.* 32. 29. *Alexander* the Great, did ask the Indian Philoſopher how long a man ſhould live; ſaith he, until he think it better to dye then to live.

1. Chriſts death is a meritorious death. Can a believer think upon the death of Chriſt, as meriting peace with God, pardon of ſin, juſtification, glorification, and yet be afraid to die? What, Is the death of Chriſt thus meritorious, and ſhall we ſtill be unwilling to depart?

2. Is not death a ſword in your Fathers hand? It is true, a ſword in a mad mans hand, or in an enemies hand, might make one tremble, but when the ſword is

is in the fathers hands, the childe doth not fear. Grant that death is a ſword, yet why ſhould the childe fear and be afraid, when it is in the fathers hand, that will be ſure to handle it ſo as he ſhall not be hurt or cut by it.

3. Remember that Chriſts death is a death conquering death; he hath taken away the ſting of death, that it cannot hurt you; and his death is a death ſanctifying and a death-ſweetning death; he hath by his death ſanctified and ſweetned death to us.

Death is a fall that came by a fall, to die is to be no more unhappy, if we conſider death aright; O (ſaith one) that I could ſee death, not as it was, but as thou Lord haſt now made it, it is the greateſt Monarch, and the ancienſt King of the world; Death reigned from *Adam* to *Moſes*, ſaith St. *Paul*, oh but the Lord Jeſus hath as it were diſarmed death, and triumpht over death, he hath taken away its ſting, ſo that it cannot ſting us, and we may play with it, and put it into our boſomes, as we may a ſnake whoſe ſting is pulled out. The Apoſtle upon this conſideration, challengeth death, and out-braves death, and bids death doe his worſt in that, 1 *Cor.* 15. 56, 57.

4. Did not Chriſt willingly leave his fathers boſome for your ſake? Did he not

The fear of death is worſe then the pains of death. (*Timor mortis ipſa morte pejor*) becauſe fear of death kils us often, whereas death it ſelf can do it but once. *Ejus eſt timere mortem qui ad Chriſtũ nolit ire Cyp.* Let him fear death that is loth to go to Chriſt. *Mori non metuo ſed damnari metuo.* I fear not to dye, but I fear to be damned, ſaith one. *Una guttula plus valet quam cœlum & terra.* *Luther* ſpeaking of the blood of Chriſt, ſaith, that one little drop is more worth then

not willingly die for you ; did Chriſt plead thus, Theſe robes are too good for me to leave off, this Crown too glorious for me to lay aſide, I am too great to ſuffer for ſuch a people : No, but he readily leaves his fathers boſome, he laies down his Crown, and puts off his robes, and ſuffers a curſed, cruell, and ignominious death. Ah ſoules you ſhould reaſon thus, Did Chriſt die for me that I might live with him ? I will not therefore deſire to live long from him, all men go willingly to ſee him whom they love, and ſhall I be unwilling to die, that I may ſee him whom my ſoul loves ? Shall Chriſt lay by all his glory and pomp, and marry a poor ſoul that had neither portion nor proportion : and ſhall this ſoul be unwilling to goe home to ſuch a husband ? O, think of it you ſouls that are unwilling to die.

Preſent life is not *(vita, ſed via ad vitam)* life but the way to life ; for when we ceaſe to be men we begin to be as Angels, they are only creatures of inferiour nature that are pleaſed with the preſent : Man is a future creature, the eye of his ſoul looks back, the Labourer haſtens from his work to his bed, the marriner rows hard to gain the port, the traveller is glad when he is neer his Inne, ſo ſhould Saints when they are neer death,

Heaven and Earth.

If the ſoules under the Altar, cry *uſq; quo Domine*, how long Lord, if they ſolicit for the day of judgement, why not I for the day of death, ſince deaths day is but the eve of Gods day.

Zeno ſaid, I have no fear but of old Age.

death, becauſe then they are neer heaven, they are neer their Inne.

5. Are you not compleat in Chriſt? why ſhould a believer be afraid to die, that ſtands compleat before God in the righteouſneſſe of the Lord Jeſus? If we ſhould appear in our own righteouſneſſe, in our own duties, it would be dreadfull to think of dying, but a believer is compleat in him, *&c. Ye are compleat in him*, Col. 2. 10. In *Revelat.* 14. 4, 5. they are ſaid to be *without fault before the Throne of God.* And in *Cant.* 4. 7. *Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no ſpot in thee*: A believer when he dies, he appears before God in the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt; all the ſpots and blemiſhes of his ſoul are covered with the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt, which is a matchleſſe, ſpotleſſe, pearleſſe righteouſneſſe. Chriſts Spouſe hath perfection of beauty, ſhe is all glorious within and without, ſhe is ſpotleſſe and blameleſſe, ſhe is the faireſt among women, that ſhe may be a meet mate for him that is fairer then all the children of men, *Pſal.* 45. 2. The Saints are as that Tree of Paradiſe, *Gen.* 3. fair to his eye, and pleaſant to his palate, or as *Abſalom* in whom there was no blemiſh from head to foot, think of theſe things to ſweeten your laſt changes, and to make you long to

Ipſe unus erit tibi omnia, quia in ipſo uno bono, bona ſunt omnia. Aug. One Chriſt wil be to thee in ſtead of all things elſe, becauſe in him are all good things to be found.

to be in the boſome of Chriſt.

Sixthly, conſider that the Saints dying day is to them the Lords pay day. Every Prayer ſhall then have its anſwer, all hungrings and thirſtings ſhall be filled and ſatisfied; every ſigh, groan and teare that hath fallen from the Saints eyes, ſhall then be recompenced. Then they ſhall be paid and recompenced for all publick ſervice, and all family ſervice and and all cloſet ſervice. Now a Crown ſhal be ſet upon their heads, and glorious Robes put upon their backs, and golden Scepters put into their hands, their dying day being the Lords pay day, they ſhall hear the Lord ſaying to them, *Well done good and faithful ſervants, enter into your Maſters joy.* In that day they ſhall find that God is not like *Antiochus*, who promiſed often, but ſeldome gave; no. Then God will make good all thoſe golden and glorious Promiſes that he hath made to them, eſpecially thoſe that are cited in the margent. *Now God will give them gold for braſſe, and ſilver for Iron, felicity for miſery, plenty for poverty, honour for diſhonour, freedome for bondage, Heaven for Earth, an immortal Crown for a mortal Crown.

That is not death but life, that joins the dying man to Chriſt; and that is not life but death, which ſeparates the living man from Chriſt.

*Rev. 2. 10. & 3. 4. 12 22. & 7. 16, 17.

Seventhly, conſider this, The way to glory is by miſery, the way to life is by death. In this world we are all *Benonies*,

the Sons of ſorrow, the way to Heaven is by weeping croſſe; Chriſts paſſion week was before his aſcenſion day, none paſſeth to Paradiſe but by burning Seraphims, we cannot goe out of *Ægypt*, but through the Red Sea, the children of *Iſrael* came to *Jeruſalem* through the Valley of tears, and croſſed the ſwift River of *Jordan* before they came to the ſweet waters of *Siloam*. There is no paſſing into Paradiſe, but under the flaming Sword of this Angel death; there is no coming to that glorious City above, but through this ſtrait dark, dirty lane; no wiping all tears from your eyes, but with your winding-ſheet, which ſhould make you entertain death (*Non ut hoſtis, ſed ut hoſpes*) not as a Foe, but as a Friend, not as a ſtranger, but as a gueſt that you had long looked for, and bid welcome death more bleſſed then your birth. Every man is willing to go to his home, though the way that leads to it be never ſo dark dirty or dangerous, & ſhall believers be unwilling to go to their homes, becauſe they are to go through a dark entry to thoſe glorious lightſome and eternal Manſions that Chriſt hath prepared for them? ſurely no.

A man will eaſily ſwallow a bitter Pill to get health The Phyſitian helps us not without pain, and yet we reward him for it.

Death to a believer is the gate of Heaven, it is (*Janua vitæ*) the door of life, it conveys us out of the wilder neſſe into *Canaan*, out of a troubleſome Sea into a quiet *Haven*. John 14 1, 2 3

Eighthly, conſider, That while we are in this world, our weak and imperfect, and diſeaſed bodies, caſt chains, and fetters,

ters, reſtraints, hindrances, and impediments upon the ſoul, that the ſoul is hindred from many high and noble actings, which in a ſtate of ſeparation it is free to. In a ſtate of ſeparation the ſoule works clearer, and underſtands better, and diſcourſes wiſer, and rejoyces louder, and loves noblier, and deſires purer, & hopes ſtronger then it can doe here.

When *Plato* ſaw one over indulgent to his body, by high feeding it, he askt him what he meant to make his Priſon ſo ſtrong.

'Tis reported of *Apollonius*, That he had a familiar ſpirit engaged in a Jewel. Such is the ſoul of man in the body; the ſoul while it is in this body of clay, cannot act like her ſelfe, like a ſpirit whoſe nature is to ſoar aloft towards the place whence ſhe came. When the ſoul is upon the wings for Heaven, the body like a lump of lead puls it down to the Earth, *&c.*

Now the ſoul cannot look out at the eys, but it wil be infected, nor hear by the ears, but it will be diſtracted, nor ſmel at the noſtrils, and not be tainted, taſt by the tongue, and not be allured, and touch by the hand, and not be defiled. Every ſenſe and member is too ready upon every occaſion and temptation, to betray the ſoul, which ſhould make us willing to dye, and to long for that day wherein our bodies ſhall be glorified.

The Greeks call the body the ſouls bo d, the ſouls Sepulchre.

Ah believers, it will be but as a day before thoſe bodies of yours, that are now

like a Picture out of frame, or a houſe out of repair that are now deformed and diſeaſed, &c. ſhall be agile and nimble,
Mat. 17. 2. ſwift and facilein their motion, for clarity and brightneſſe they ſhall be like Chriſts body when it was transfigured, they ſhall be very amiable and beautiful, they ſhall be impatſible and immortal. Here our bodies are ſtill dying. It is more proper to ask when we ſhall make an end of dying, then to ask when we ſhall dye. Death is a Worm that is alwayes feeding at the Root of our lives, which ſhould make death more deſireable then life.

Luke 2. 28, 29, 30. Ninthly, Dwell much upon the readineſſe and willingneſſe of other Saints to dye. Good old *Simeon* having firſt laid Chriſt in his heart, and then taking him up in his arms, he ſings; *Lord now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.* I have lived enough, I have my life; I have long'd enough, I have my love; I have ſeen enough, I have my ſight; I have ſerv'd enough, I have my reward; I have ſorrowed enough, I have my joy. So the be-
2 Cor. 5. lieving *Corinthians*, they groaned earneſtly to be cloathed upon with their houſe which is from Heaven, they groaned that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life, and *that they might be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord.*

So

So *Paul* deſires earneſtly *to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, which is beſt of all.* So thoſe in *Peter, they look for and haſten the coming of the day of God.* They are ſaid to haſten the day of God, in reſpect of their earneſt deſires after it, and in reſpect of their preparations for it. So the ſouls under the Altar, cry, *How long Lord, how long?* &c.

Phil. 1. 23. 2 Pet. 3. 12. Rev. 6. 9, 10.

So *Paula*, that Noble Lady, when one did read to her, *Cant.* 2. 11. *The winter is paſt, and the ſinging of Birds is come.* *Yea*, ſhe replied, *the ſinging of Birds is come*, and ſo ſhe went ſinging into Heaven. So *Juel*, *Lord now let thy ſervant depart in peace, break off all delayes, Lord receive my ſpirit.* Further he ſaid, *I have not ſo lived, that I am aſhamed to live longer; neither dye I fear to dye, becauſe we have a merciful Lord, a Crown of righteouſneſſe is laid up for me. Chriſt is my righteouſneſſe.* So another being in a ſwound, (as her friends thought) a little before her end, they cryed give her ſome *Roſa ſolis*, but ſhe put it back, ſaying, *I have Roſa ſolis you know not of.* So Mr. *Pearing* a little before his death, ſaid, *I find and feel ſo much inward joy and comfort in my ſoule, that if I were put to my choice whether to dye or live, I would a thouſand times rather chooſe death then life, if it might ſtand with the holy will of God.* So

Let all the Devils in hell (ſaith *Auguſtine*) beſet me round, let faſting macerate my body, let ſo rowes oppreſſe my mind, let pains conſume my fleſh, let watching dry me, or heat ſcorch me, or cold freeze me; let all theſe, and what can come more, happen unto me, ſo I may enjoy my Saviour.

Mr. *Bolton* lying on his death bed, ſaid, *I am by the wonderfull mercies of God, as full of comfort as my heart can hold, and feel nothing in my ſoul but Chriſt, with whom I heartily deſire to be.* Ah Chriſtians! if the exceeding willingneſs of the Saints to dye, will not make you willing to dye, what will?

Tenthly and laſtly, conſider this, that the Lord will not leave thee, but be with thee in that houre. *Yea though I walke through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evill, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy ſtaffe they comfort me,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt. So the Apoſtle, *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſſe, and be content with ſuch things as you have, for he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* There are five Negatives in the Greek, to aſſure Gods people that he will never forſake them; five times in Scripture is this precious promiſe renewed, that we may preſſe it till we have preſſed the ſweetneſſe out of it. Though God may ſeem to leave thee, thou mayſt be confident he will never forſake thee. Why ſhould that man be afraid of death, that may be alwayes confident of the preſence of the Lord of life?

Pſal. 23. 4. Heb. 13. 5.

Maximilian the Emperor was ſo delighted with that ſentence, *Si Deus nobiſcum,* If God be with us, who ſhalbe againſt us, that he cauſed it to be written upon the walls in moſt rooms of his Palace

The next Uſe ſhall be to ſtir you all up to prepare and fit for your dying day. Ah Chriſtians, what is your wholelife but

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a day to fit for the hour of death? what is your great buſinette in this world, but to prepare and fit for another world? It was a ſad ſpeech of *Cæſar Borgias*, who being ſick to death, ſaid, *When I lived I provided for every thing but death, now I muſt dye, and am unprovided to dye.* Ah Chriſtians, you have need every day to pray with *Moſes*, *Lord teach us to number our dayes, that we may apply our hearts to wiſdome.* And to follow the counſel of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cauſe darkneſſe, and before your feet ſtumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the ſhadow of death, and make it groſſe darkneſſe.* Old age is the dark mountain which makes a broad way narrow, and a plain way cragged. It is a high point of heavenly wiſdome, to conſider our latter end. *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end.* *Jeruſalem* paid dear for forgetting her latter end. *Jeruſalems* filthineſſe was in her skirts, becauſe ſhe remembred not her latter end, therefore alſo ſhe came down wonderfully. To provoke you to prepare and fit for a dying day, conſider ſeriouſly theſe following things.

Pſal. 90. 13
Jer. 13. 16.

Deut. 23. 19.

James 1. 9.

1 He that prepares not for his dying day, runs the hazard of looſing his im-

Aut pœnitendâ aut perendiñ.

mortal ſoul. Though true repentance be never too late, yet late repentance is ſeldome true. The Heathen man could ſay. *He that is not ready to repent to day, will be leſſe ready to morrow; his underſtanding will be more dark, his heart more hard, his will more crooked, his affections more diſtempered, his conſcience more benummed* &c. *Beda* tels a ſtory of a certain great man, that was admoniſhed in his ſickneſs to repent, who anſwered, *That he would not yet, for if he ſhould recover, his companions would laugh at him*; but growing ſicker and ſicker, his friends preſſed him again to repent, but then he told them it was too late (*Quia jam judicatus ſum & condemnatus*) *For now* (ſaid he) *I am judged and condemned.* It is the greateſt wiſdome in the world, to do that every day, that a man would doe on a dying day. And to be afraid to live in ſuch an eſtate as a man would be afraid to dye in. Ah ſouls, you are afraid to dye in ſuch and ſuch ſins, and will you not be afraid to live in thoſe ſins?

2 Again, the certainty of death ſhould beſpeak you to prepare for death. When we would affirm any thing to be infallibly true, we ſay, *As ſure as death.* *It is appointed* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *unto men once to dye, but after this the judgement.* The Greek word that is Tranſlated; *It is*

Heb. 9. 27.

ap-

appointed, ſignifieth, it lyeth as a mans lot: *Once*, implies two things. 1 A certainty, it ſhall once be. 2 A ſingularity, it will be but once. *What man lives and ſhall not ſee death?* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) That is, no man lives and ſhall not ſee death. In *Job* the Grave is called, *The houſe appointed for all the living*. *Solomon* calls the Grave (*Baiith Gnolam*, i.e. *Domum ſeculi*) *The Houſe of age*; the Learned Tranſlate it *Long home*, where men muſt abide for a long time, even till the Reſurrection. To live without fear of death is to dye living; to labour not to dye, is labour in vain. Death hath for its Motto, *Nulli cedo, I yield to none*. 'Tis decreed that *all muſt dye*. Every mans death-day is his dooms-day.

ἀπόκειται

Pſal. 89. 48.

Job 30. 23. Eccleſ. 12. 5.

בתעולם

The *French* have a Proverb, *Three things* (ſay they) *agree in the world, the Prieſt, the Lawyer, and Death*. The Prieſt takes the living and the dead, the Lawyer right and wrong, and Death the weak and ſtrong. But the *Jewes* have a better, *In Golgotha are to be ſeen ſkuls of all ſizes*; that is, Death comes on the young as well as the old, the Lot is fallen upon all, and therefore all muſt dye. All men are made of one mold and matter. *Duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return. All have ſinned, are fallen ſhort of the glory of God*, and therefore death muſt paſſe upon all.

Adam of *Adamah*, *homo ab humo*.

Gen. 3. 19. Rom. 5. 12.

3 The

3 The uncertainty of the time of your death do's beſpeak you with open mouth to be in a conſtant readineſſe and preparedneſſe for death. No man knows when he ſhall dye, nor what kind of death he ſhall dye, whether a natural or a violent death. *Auguſtus* died in a Complement. *Tiberius* in diſſimulation. *Galba* with a ſentence. *Veſpatian* with a jeſt. *Zeuxes* died laughing at the Picture of an old woman which he drew with his owne hand. *Sophocles* was choaked with the ſtone in a Grape. *Diodorus* the Logician dyed for ſhame that he could not anſwer a joculary Queſtion propounded at the Table by *Stilpo*. *Joannes Maſius* Preaching upon the raiſing of the woman of *Naomi's* Son from the dead, within three hours after dyed himſelfe. *Fœlix* Earle of *Wartenberg*, ſitting at Supper with many of his Friends, ſome at the Table fell into diſcourſe about *Luther*, and the peoples general receiving his Doctrine, upon which the Earl ſwore a great Oath, *That before he dyed he would ride up to the ſpurs in the blood of Lutherans*; but the very ſame night God ſtretched out his hand ſo againſt him, that he was choaked with his own blood.

Bibulus a Roman General riding in triumph in all his glory, a Tyle fel from a houſe in the ſtreet, and beat out his brains.

Conſider in the laſt place, That it is a ſolemn thing to dye. Death is a ſolemn parting of two near friends, ſoul and body.

dy. Remember, all other preparations are to no purpoſe, if a man be not prepared to dye. What will it avail a man to prepare this and that for his children, kindred or friends, *&c.* when he hath made no preparations for his ſoul, for his eternal wel-being? As death leaves you, ſo judgement ſhall finde you. If death take you before you expect it, and are prepared for it, it will be the more terrible to you; it will cauſe your countenance to be changed, your thoughts to be troubled, your loins to be looſed, and your knees to be daſhed one againſt another. Oh the Hell of horrors and terrors that attends thoſe ſoules that have their greateſt worke to doe when they come to dye; therefore as you love your ſouls, & as you would be happy in death, and everlaſtingly bleſſed after death, prepare and fit for death. Look that you build upon nothing below Chriſt, look that you have a real intereſt in Chriſt, look that you dye daily to ſin, to the world, and to your owne righteouſneſſe. Look that conſcience be always waking, ſpeaking, and tender; Look that Chriſt be your Lord and Maſter; Look that all reckonings ſtand right betwixt the Lord and your ſouls; Look that you be fruitful, faithful and watchful, and then your dying day ſhall be to you as the day of harveſt

He that prepares for his body and friends, but neglects his ſoul, is like him that prepares for his ſlave, but neglects his wife.

When I was young (ſaith *Seneca* the Heathen) I then ſtudied, *Artem bene vivendi*, the Art of living well, when Age came upon me, I then ſtudied *Artem bene moriendi*, the Art of dying well.

harveſt to the Husband-man, as the day of deliverance to the Priſoner, as the day of Coronation to the King, and as the day of Marriage to the Bride. Your dying day ſhall be a day of triumph and exaltation, a day of freedom and conſolation, a day of reſt and ſatisfaction. Then the Lord Jeſus ſhall be as Honey in the mouth, Oyntment in the noſtrils, muſick in the ear, and a Jubilee in the heart.

A great man wrote thus a little before his death, *Spes & fortuna valete.* Hope and fortune farewel.

The laſt Uſe then is this, If a believers laſt day be his beſt day, then by the Rule of contraries, a wicked mans laſt day muſt be his worſt day, for he muſt there lye down with the ſins of his youth. Death ſhall put an end to all the benefits and comforts that now thou enjoyeſt. Now thou muſt ſay honours, friends, pleaſures, riches, credit, *&c.* farewel for ever, I ſhall never have good day more, I ſhall never be merry more; my Sun is ſet, my glaſs is out, my hopes fail, my heart failes; all offers of grace are paſt, the Spirit will never ſtrive with me more, free grace will never move me more, the golden Scepter ſhall never be held forth more, death will be an inlet to judgement, yea, to an eternity of miſery. What the voyce was of God to *Adam* upon eating the forbidden fruit, what the coming of the flood was to the prophane men of the old world, what the waters

Sigiſmund the Emperor, and *Lewis* the 11 of *France*, ſtraitly charged all their ſervants, that they ſhould not dare to name that bitter word Death, when they ſaw them ſick, ſo dreadful was the very thoughts of death to them.

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of the red Sea were to *Pharaoh* and his Army, what the fire from Heaven was to the Captains that came up againſt *Eliah*, what the burning Furnace was to them that caſt in *Shadrach*, *Meſhech*, and *Abednego*, the ſame will be the day of death to prophane wicked ſoules. Ah ſinners, my prayer for you ſhall be, That the Lord would awaken you, and ſet up a choyce light in your ſouls, that you may ſee where you are, and what you are; that he would give you to break off your ſins by repentance, and give you an intereſt in himſelf, that ſo *For you to live may be Chriſt, and to dye may be gaine.* That *in life and death Chriſt may be advantage to you*; and that death may be the Funerall of all your ſins and ſorrows, and an inlet to all that joy and pleaſure, that bleſſednesſe and happineſſe that is at Gods right hand.

Chriſtian Reader;

BE pleaſed to paſſe by, or to Correct with thy Pen, the Faults that have eſcaped, by reaſon of the Authors abſence from the Preſſe.

FINIS.

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